

City of Columbus, OH

Director of Public Utilities



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The City

The City of Columbus, the capital of Ohio, is located in the heart of the Buckeye State and is one of the nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas. It currently has a population of over 700,000. The community offers residents a variety of cultural, entertainment and educational opportunities. With a rock-bottom unemployment rate, jobs in Greater Columbus are plentiful. In addition, housing prices range from \$70,000 to \$350,000.

The arts and cultural amenities of Columbus rival those found in other major cities across the United States. Residents enjoy an abundance of galleries and performance space, exciting downtown festivals and world-class restaurants. In addition to this, Columbus offers an exciting mix of sports including: "America's Hardest Working Team," Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew, hometown favorites and Triple A affiliate of the New York Yankees, the Columbus Clippers; and the National Hockey League team, the Columbus Blue Jackets.

The City is also home to Ohio State University and 15 other area colleges and universities. It has 47 public school districts serving more than 230,000 students and more than 40 private and parochial schools emphasizing a variety of philosophies. The region also has several of the wealthiest school districts in the State. This is reflected in the above average SAT, ACT and state proficiency test scores achieved by school districts in Greater Columbus.



The Columbus City Council is the chief policy-making arm of the City government, empowered by the City Charter to exercise legislative control over City expenditures. Citizens elect the Mayor and the seven-member Council at-large to four-year terms of office.

The City's FY2003 General Fund is about \$544 million. For FY2003 the City employs 5,294 full time employees from the General Fund.

The Department

The Department of Public Utilities' mission statement is "The City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities regulates and governs the activities of its municipal utility divisions, providing essential water, sewage, drainage and electrical services to the Central Ohio community". The Department strives to provide excellent core services, while focusing on customer service and neighborhoods. The Department works closely with Mayor Michael B. Coleman and the Columbus City Council to ensure these goals.

The Department's annual budget is over \$350 million and includes a diverse staff of approximately 1,300 employees. Over the next five years, the Department will also oversee a capital budget in excess of \$1 billion.

The Department of Public Utilities is comprised of three separate Divisions—water, sewerage and drainage, and electricity. The Department is responsible for providing an ample supply of safe drinking water to roughly one million people throughout Columbus and its surrounding suburban communities. Additionally, the Department operates a sanitary sewer system that services the same population. Both customer bases continue to grow. Further, a storm water section is housed in the Department and is responsible for creating and managing projects that minimize flooding and mitigate water quality impacts of run-off in Columbus. Finally, the Department's electricity division is charged with providing streetlights to City residents through the sale of electricity to its more than 13,000 customers.

- The Division of Water invests millions of dollars in its treatment and distribution systems to meet the demands of this rapidly growing area. Steps have been taken to ensure safe drinking water for future generations through such projects as "Water Beyond 2000" (securing an adequate water supply) and the "Water Conservation Program" (encouraging water-wise lifestyles). The Division's operating budget and number of employees, respectively is as follows:

- Water: \$110 million; 518 full time employees

- The Division of Sewerage and Drainage, often referred to as the "Guardians of the Environment," continues to meet the challenges associated with this rapid growth. These challenges include protecting public health, assuring development of new neighborhoods, designing

storm water protection programs, meeting the mandates imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency, upgrading its treatment plants and maintaining its sewer lines. Within this Division, there is a separate stormwater management section with an independent funded budget. The Division's operating budget and number of employees, respectively is as follows:

- Sewers: \$150 million; 492 full time employees and,
 - Storm: \$19 million; 37 full time employees
- The Division of Electricity is pushing forward in achieving its goal of lighting all of Columbus's streets by the year 2020 as outlined in its long-range street lighting plan, "Project 2020." A street lighting master plan helps guide the Division's Capital Improvement Plan and has improved neighborhood acceptance of Project 2020. The Division's operating budget and number of employees, respectively is as follows:
 - Electricity: \$67 million; 123 full time employees

For more information on the Department and its Divisions please see www.columbus.org.

Challenges/Priorities

- To continue to serve as a key agent for economic growth and environmental safety for the City and the region.
- To continue collaboration with the City's Cabinet and further the shared mission of service to Columbus citizens.
- To understand customer base of Columbus and all other jurisdictions under contract services, provide service at competitive rates, and know the importance of efficiency and cost effectiveness in this highly competitive and deregulated economy.
- To help develop, implement, and support citywide customer service initiatives, like the City's development permit "one stop shop" and its 311 customer service and work order management system.
- To continue to focus on the security and safe preservation of the utility facilities and infrastructure in light of homeland security threats.
- To assure compliance with all Federal, State, and Local environmental health and safety regulations, including the fulfillment of a 2002 Consent Decree with the State of Ohio that commits the City to make approximately \$600 million of improvements to its sanitary sewer system over the next decade to address sewer overflow issues.

The Position

The Director of Public Utilities is appointed by the Mayor and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor at a salary fixed by ordinance of the City Council.

The Director of Public Utilities is responsible for administering the Department of Public Utilities and its three Divisions—water, sewerage and drainage, and electricity—with particular emphasis on creating and implementing public policy; advising the Mayor and City Council on all issues related to Public Utilities; and working with the City's numerous partners, including municipalities, regulating agencies, citizens and the business community.

Typical duties of the position include, but are not limited to:

- Leading, managing and evaluating the continuing operation of the three Divisions and its numerous facilities, including three water treatment plants and two wastewater treatment plants.
- Analyzing systems, business practices and resources to identify opportunities for Departmental improvement.
- Serving as the responsible signatory for the Department on various regulatory documents and permits.
- Reviewing and approving engineering plans and drawings on behalf of the Department as they pertain to utilities and related infrastructure.
- Coordinating the activities of the Department of Public Utilities with other departments and divisions across the City.
- Building and fostering relationships with all City and Department partners.
- Managing the Department's three Division administrators and providing counsel and direction where appropriate.
- Negotiating and thereafter entering into contracts for the provision of water, sewerage and drainage, and electrical services with other public entities and private parties.
- Attending meetings of the City Council and taking part in discussions related to the operations of the Department.
- Working with the two of the City's labor unions to provide the best working environment for the Department's employees.
- Appointing and promoting employees, reviewing disciplinary actions, approving or disapproving leaves of absences, and other related personnel matters.
- Developing staff and willingly serving as a mentor in the interest of fostering professional growth within the Department.
- Entering into contracts on behalf of the Department and/or City for the purchase of goods and services in compliance with all applicable laws.
- Participating in appropriate professional activities to stay current with developments affecting the operations of the Department.
- Overseeing management activities necessary to administer, including budgetary activities, staff and resource deployment and report preparation.
- Assisting in creating periodic reports and updates to key City personnel and outside organizations.

The Candidate

Education, Certifications and Experience

- Must have a bachelor's degree and at least ten years of responsible experience in municipal civil engineering, public utilities, public works administration, public utility or environmental regulatory agency, or a related field. A post-graduate degree is desired in the following areas: public utilities management, engineering, law, public or business administration or a related field.
- Registration as a professional engineer would be a plus, but is not required. For example, the candidate could be a professional or technical expert, such as a lawyer with regulatory experience or a chemist or biologist.
- Experience in a metropolitan (urban/suburban) community is preferred. Experience should not be limited to only service in rural communities or confined, self-sufficient governmental installations, like a military base.
- Lastly, experience in managing a unionized workforce is very important. Experience with Total Quality Management or other continuous improvement/customer service improvement programs, efficiency, and cost-cutting programs is a plus.

Skills and Knowledge

The selected candidate will have demonstrated leadership and management skills in a public and highly regulated environment. He/She should be a proven manager with strong problem solving skills. The candidate should have strong interpersonal, public relations and oral and written communications skills, as well as:

- Working in conjunction with a staff and understanding and implementing the "big picture," rather than focusing on day-to-day operations.

- People management and leadership to guide the Department and serve as its top representative.
- Working with suburban partners in planning growth of Central Ohio through utility extensions.
- Working with employees and employee groups on matters concerning personnel problems, procedures, regulations and grievances.

In addition, he/she should have extensive knowledge of:

- The principles and practices of municipal utilities and state, federal and local statutes and ordinances related to utilities matters.
- Working for a municipal utility or in a related field that regularly interacts with a municipal utility.
- Engineering plans, drawings and other technically related components of a public utility.
- Public sector budgets, particularly utility budgets and rate structures.

Management Style and Personal Traits

The ideal candidate should support and be committed to the Mayor's vision, plan, goals and objectives to promote the City's continued growth and development. Also, he/she should have experience working with a diverse workforce, contractor, and customer base. The candidate should have a proven record in addressing workplace issues, be able to make and uphold controversial decisions, be able to develop a team of people with problem solving skills, and have experience dealings with elected officials such as City Council, state legislature and other legislative bodies.

Compensation

The compensation range is from \$110,760 to \$133,037 for this position, with hiring dependent upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. It is at a pay range grade of 100. In addition, benefits are provided which include: medical, dental, vision, life and disability insurance; pre-tax dependent care program; and, holiday vacation and sick leave. Additionally, a vehicle and a designated parking space are provided at no cost.

How To Apply

Send resumes or nominations by **May 30, 2003** to:

Norman C. Roberts or
Sherrill A. Uyeda

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